



Coaching Association of Canada Selects Doug Leigh for Prestigious National Award

OTTAWA, ON — The Coaching Association of Canada (CAC) today announced that world-acclaimed figure skating coach Douglas Leigh of Barrie, Ont., has been selected as the winner of the 2008 Geoff Gowan Award for his lifetime contribution to coaching development.

“Doug Leigh has built an admirable reputation that epitomizes the Geoff Gowan Award,” says Jean-Marie De Koninck, chair of CAC’s Board of Directors. “Like Geoff, Doug is a dreamer, a builder, an innovator, and an achiever. He has dared to do things that seemed impossible, like turning a small Ontario town into one of the most respected figure skating training centres in the world where, year after year, he has produced national, world, and Olympic champions. CAC is proud to recognize Doug with this richly deserved award.”

Through four decades of dedication to coaching and to skating development, Leigh’s influence has touched all levels of the sport in Canada and has reached around the world. The founding director of the renowned Barrie-based Mariposa School of Skating (MSS), he has produced more national and international champions than any other coach in Canada. His protégés include two-time Olympic silver medallist Brian Orser and three-time world champion Elvis Stojko, as well as 26 other Canadian champions and 17 international champions. To date, his skaters have won over 150 national and international medals, including 17 world and Olympic medals, and he himself has coached at 26 world championships and six Olympic Winter Games.

As a community activist, Leigh participates in local fund-raising activities for hospitals, cancer research, and recreational facilities. Events include the Mariposa Charity Gala, the Mariposa Golf Tournament, and an annual gala evening of figure skating.

Determined to produce balanced, well-rounded athletes, Leigh convinced the local board of education to establish a secondary school on MSS property. As a result, the innovative Mariposa Cooperative Education Program for High Performance Skaters is linked directly to a local high school.

Leigh has won many awards for his coaching, including eight Petro-Canada Coaching Excellence Awards. He has been inducted into Skate Canada’s Hall of Fame and was a finalist for the Leadership in Sport Award at the 2007 Canadian Sport Awards.

About the Geoff Gowan Award

Dr. Geoff Gowan is a former track and field, soccer, and rugby coach who now resides in Halifax. He was president of CAC for 16 years and for 25 years was a popular and respected colour commentator for CBC’s television coverage of track and field.

The Geoff Gowan Award was created in 1996 and recognizes lifetime contribution to coaching development. It is awarded to a coach who has presented a positive public image of coaching and enhanced the role of the coach with the Canadian public.

The Geoff Gowan Award will be presented during Petro-Canada Sport Leadership sportif, scheduled to take place in Calgary, November 7-9, 2008. The Sport Leadership Awards Ceremony will take place on Friday, November 7, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. at the Calgary Telus Convention Centre.

Previous winners of the Geoff Gowan Award are:

- 2007 Andy Higgins, Athletics
- 2006 Clare Drake, Ice Hockey
- 2005 Charles Cardinal, Volleyball
- 2004 Donald Dion, Diving
- 2003 Marilyn Savage, Artistic Gymnastics
- 2002 Al Morrow, Rowing
- 2000 Doug Clement, Athletics
- 1999 Jack Donohue, Basketball
- 1996 Geoff Gowan, Athletics

About CAC

The Coaching Association of Canada is a not-for-profit amateur sport organization with the mission of enhancing the experiences of all Canadian athletes through quality coaching. CAC and its partners deliver a leading-edge coaching system whose goal is to have an impact on 1,000,000 athletes through the training of 100,000 coaches each year in the National Coaching Certification Program. Visit www.coach.ca for more information about coach education and training.

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